

Amendments to the Specification:

None

Amendments to the Drawings:

None

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 1, 6, 25, 28, 29, and 31 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Robinson.

Claims 1, 25, and 29 have been amended to include the limitation of a temperature range of 235°C to 350°C. This temperature no longer overlaps the disclosed temperature range of 100°C to 225°C in the Robinson patent. The temperature range of the instant invention is necessary to passivate the exposed material as discussed in the instant disclosure. See, for example, page 9, lines 15-16; page 13, lines 6-10; and page 10, lines 12-14. There is no teaching regarding passivation in the Robinson patent. The simultaneous material removal and passivation is clearly nonobvious and novel over the Robinson patent.

Claim 1 has been amended to further include the limitation of simultaneously passivating the exposed material. This is supported in the instant disclosure and not taught in the Robinson patent. Claim 1 is now allowable over the cited art. Claim 6 depends on claim 1 and is also allowable over the cited art.

The examiner states that it would be obvious that the process described in Robinson removes all of the photoresist and any residue remaining from any impartial removal of the photoresist layer would also have been removed. This statement does not describe the claimed limitations of the instant invention where a careful distinction is made between the removal of photoresist and the removal of a residue. As described on page 13, lines 11-14, the residue is formed by an interaction of the etch chemistry with the photoresist layer. This interaction changes the structure of the photoresist layer and forms a polymer that has a different chemical structure compared to the original photoresist layer. As the examiner is aware, the complexities of plasma etch chemistry dictate that it is certainly not obvious that an etch process that removes photoresist will remove a polymer with a different chemical structure. The use of the claimed process to remove a residue is not obvious over the cited art and claims 25 and 29 are allowable

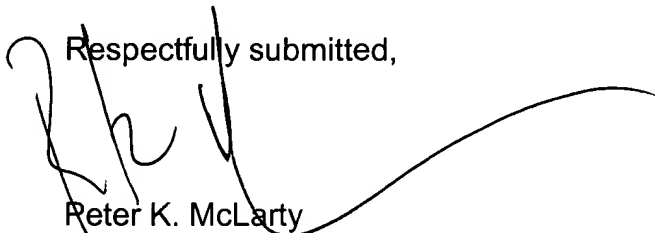
over the cited art. Claims 28 and 31 depend on claims 25 and 29 respectively and therefore contain all the limitations of the independent claims. Claims 28 and 31 are therefore also allowable over the cited art.

In light of the above, it is respectfully submitted that the present application is in condition for allowance, and notice to that effect is respectfully requested.

While it is believed that the instant response places the application in condition for allowance, should the Examiner have any further comments or suggestions, it is respectfully requested that the Examiner contact the undersigned in order to expeditiously resolve any outstanding issues.

To the extent necessary, Applicants petition for an Extension of Time under 37 CFR 1.136. Please charge any fees in connection with the filing of this paper, including extension of time fees, to the deposit account of Texas Instruments Incorporated, Account No. 20-0668.

Respectfully submitted,



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